

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-08 INR-10
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R 200745Z JUL 78
FM AMCONSUL DURBAN
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INFO AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
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EO 11652: NA
TAGS: PINT, EINV, ELAB, SF
SUBJ: INKATHA POSITION ON ENFORCEMENT OF LABOR CODES
AND DISINVESTMENT

REF: PRETORIA 3913 (NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY: AT ITS ANNUAL CONGRESS, CHIEF BUTHELEZI'S
INKATHA ORGANIZATION APPROVED A PLAN TO MONITOR THE ADHERENCE
OF FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC COMPANIES TO CODES URGING FAIR LABOR
PRACTICES IN SOUTH AFRICA. THE CONGRESS ALSO ENDORESED
BUTHELEZI'S ARGUMENTS IN OPPOSITION TO FOREIGN DISINVESTMENT
IN SA BUT INDICATED THE QUESTION IS SUBJECT TO REVIEW. CHIEF
BUTHELEZI APPARENTLY SENSES INCREASED PRESSURE, FROM WITHIN
INKATHA AS WELL AS FROM OTHER SA BLACKS AND FROM ABROAD, TO
SUPPORT SOME FORM OF ECONOMIC PRESSURE ON THE SAG. HOWEVER
HE BELIEVES SANCTIONS OR DISINVESTMENT WOULD BE OF LITTLE
EFFECT AND HARMFUL TO HIS PEOPLE IN THE SHORT TERM. HE
PROBABLY HAS OPTED FOR MONITORING OF LABOR CODES AS A DEVICE
BOTH TO PROVIDE INKATHA WITH A FOCUS OF ACTIVITY AND DEFLECT
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CRITICISM FROM HIS REFUSAL TO SUPPORT MORE RADICAL MEASURES.
END SUMMARY.

2. INKATHA'S THIRD ANNUAL CONGRESS, HELD IN ULUNDI JULY 12-15,
PASSED A RESOLUTION IMPLEMENTING PROPOSALS (DEVELOPED BY GIBSON
THULA AND PROPOSED TO THE CONGRESS BY CHIEF BUTHELEZI) FOR A
PROGRAM OF MONITORING THE ADHERENCE OF FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC

COMPANIES IN SA TO THE FAIR LABOR PRACTICES CODES. CODES WHICH INKATHA WILL INSIST COMPANIES FOLLOW (DEPENDING ON NATIONALITY) ARE THE SULLIVAN GUIDELINES, THE CANADIAN CODE, THE EEC CODE AND A CODE DEVELOPED BY THE URBAN FOUNDATION IN SA FOR DOMESTIC CONCERNS. CONOFF DISCUSSED THE INKATHA INITIATIVES IN CONVERSATIONS WITH THULA AND OTHERS AT THE ULUNDI CONFERENCE. ACCORDING TO THULA, THE CONCEPT IS THAT INKATHA'S 300-ODD BRANCHES (IN NATAL, TRANSVAAL AND THE FREE STATE) WILL BE GIVEN COPIES OF THE FOUR CODES AND ASKED TO EXPLAIN THEM TO THE ESTIMATED 150,000 RANK AND FILE MEMBERS, MANY OF WHOM ARE FACTORY WORKERS. THE MEMBERS, IN COOPERATION WITH "CERTAIN" BLACK UNIONS, WILL REPORT VIOLATIONS TO THEIR BRANCHES, WHICH WILL COMMUNICATE THEM TO INKATHA HEADQUARTERS IN ULUNDI. INKATHA WILL FIRST CONTACT LOCAL MANAGEMENT TO SEEK EXPLANATIONS AND COMPLIANCE BUT, FAILING TO OBTAIN SATISFACTION WILL NEXT APPROACH PARENT COMPANIES ABROAD, THEN SEND PROTESTS TO GOVERNMENT OF COUNTRIES WHERE COMPANIES ARE BASED AND, ULTIMATELY, CONTACT TRADE UNIONS AND PRESSURE GROUPS ABROAD TO PUBLICIZE ANY NON-COMPLIANCE. BUTHELEZI HIMSELF MAY PUBLICLY COMMENT ON INSTANCES OF NON-COMPLIANCE AND THERE IS CONSIDERATION OF TAKING THE PROBLEM TO THE OAU FOR ADDITIONAL PUBLICITY. THE IDEA IS TO EMBARRASS NON-COMPLYING COMPANIES AND TO EMPHASIZE THEIR ACTIVITIES IN A MANNER DESIGNED TO TARNISH THEIR PUBLIC IMAGE AND PROVIDE AMMUNITION FOR STOCKHOLDERS INTENT ON IMPROVING THE FIRMS' LABOR PRACTICES IN SA. FIRST TARGET IS UNILEVER, AND ANGLO-DUTCH COMPANY WHICH INKATHA LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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STATES HAS REFUSED TO RECOGNIZE OR DEAL WITH A BLACK LABOR UNION.

3. DISINVESTMENT: AS PART OF A MAJOR ADDRESS BUTHELEZI EXPLAINED HIS DILEMMA ON DISINVESTMENT AND ASKED THE CONGRESS TO GUIDE HIM TO A DECISION. HIS POSITION IS UNCHANGED FROM BEFORE (77 DURBAN 760) I.E. HE BELIEVES DISINVESTMENT WILL NOT PRODUCE RAPID ENOUGH RESULTS TO JUSTIFY THE HUMAN SUFFERING CAUSED TO BLACK PEOPLE. HOWEVER, HE REMAINS WILLING TO CONSIDER ARGUMENTS FOR DISINVESTMENT AND INDICATED HE COULD CHANGE HIS POSITION IF HE WERE CONVINCED THE WORLD COMMUNITY WOULD COOPERATE IN DISINVESTMENT AND SANCTIONS WHICH WOULD BE TRULY EFFECTIVE AND RESULT IN A RAPID DISMANTLING OF APARTHEID. WHILE SOMEWHAT EQUIVOCAL, HIS INTENT TO OPPOSE DISINVESTMENT AND ECONOMIC SANCTIONS FOR NOW WAS CLEAR AND THE CONGRESS PASSED A RESOLUTION REJECTING DISINVESTMENT AS UNFEASIBLE "AT PRESENT", HOWEVER LEAVING THE MATTER OPEN FOR LATER REVIEW.

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4. COMMENT: THERE IS A PROBABLE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN INKATHA'S POSITION ON DISINVESTMENT AND ITS DECISION TO MONITOR LABOR CODES. IN SEVERAL SPEECHES DURING THE CONGRESS BUTHELEZI EMPHASIZED THE PRESSURE HE IS UNDER, FROM SOME INKATHA MEMBERS AS WELL AS FROM OTHER BLACKS IN SA AND FROM ABROAD, TO SUPPORT MORE STRINGENT ECONOMIC MEASURES, NOTABLY DISINVESTMENT, TO HASTEN THE END OF APARTHEID. WHILE HE IS AWARE OF THE TOLL SUCH A PROGRAM WOULD EXTRACT FROM THE POOREST STRATA OF BLACK SOCIETY, HE ALSO APPEARS COGNIZANT OF THE POLITICAL BENEFITS SUCH AN ENDORSEMENT MIGHT OFFER HIM. THE ADOPTION OF THE LABOR MONITORING POLICY SEEMS TO BE A COMPROMISE MEASURE DESIGNED TO SHOW THE INTENT AND POWER OF INKATHA WHILE DEFLECTING CRITICISM FROM OPPONENTS WHO WANT HIM TO ENDORSE MORE RADICAL MEASURES. HIS TEMPORIZING ON THE ISSUE OF DISINVESTMENT AND THE SIMILAR TONE OF THE RESOLUTION FROM THE CONGRESS ARE INDICATIVE OF AN EQUIVOCAL POLICY DECISION WHICH BUTHELEZI APPARENTLY WISHES TO BE IN A POSITION TO ALTER SHOULD HE SENSE THE NEED.

5. FYI: THULA INDICATED HE HAD NOT HAD ANY SUBSTANTIVE
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CONTACT WITH REV. SULLIVAN ON HIS GUIDELINES BUT SAID HE HAD MET WITH AN (UNNAMED) JESUIT PRIEST FROM THE US WHO HAD RECENTLY MADE AN UNOFFICIAL VISIT TO SA TO INVESTIGATE COMPLIANCE BY US FIRMS. THULA SAID HE BELIEVED INKATHA WOULD

CONCENTRATE INITIALLY ON EUROPEAN FIRMS, IN PART BECAUSE
THEIR CODE IS GOVERNMENT SANCTIONED AND THEREFORE EASIER
TO ENFORCE THAN THE SULLIVAN GUIDELINES.
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